

§ 73.735-401

received from Government agencies or other sources for official use only within the Department or developed under a pledge of confidence is not to be divulged to unauthorized persons or agencies.

(3) *Information obtained in confidence.* Certain Department units (e.g., Food and Drug Administration, and the Social Security Administration) obtain in the course of their program activities certain information from businesses or individuals which they are forbidden by law from disclosing. These statutory prohibitions are found in 21 U.S.C. 331j, and 18 U.S.C. 1905. Each employee is responsible for observing these laws.

(4) *Use of information for private gain.* Government employees are sometimes able to obtain information about some action the Government is about to take or some other matter which is not generally known. Information of this kind shall not be used by the employee to further his or her or someone else's private financial or other interests. Such a use of official information is clearly a violation of a public trust. Employees shall not, directly or indirectly, make use of, or permit others to make use of, for the purpose of furthering any private interest, official information not made available to the general public.

(b) The Privacy Act provides criminal penalties for an employee who willfully discloses individually identifiable information from records, disclosure of which is prohibited by that Act. 5 U.S.C. 552a(i).

Subpart D—Financial Obligations

§ 73.735-401 General provisions.

(a) The Department considers the indebtedness of its employees to be a matter of their own concern. However, employees shall not by failure to meet their just financial obligations reflect adversely on the Government as their employer. Employees are expected to pay each just financial obligation in a proper and timely manner. A "just financial obligation" is one acknowledged by the employee or reduced to judgment by a court, or one imposed by law such as Federal, State, or local taxes. "In a proper and timely manner" is a manner which the Depart-

45 CFR Subtitle A (10-1-00 Edition)

ment determines does not, under the circumstances, reflect adversely on the part of an employee in meeting his or her financial obligations, particularly those that relate to support of the employee's family, to payment of Federal, State, or local taxes, or to payments to tax-supported institutions such as a city or State hospital, or educational institution. If for some reason an employee is unable to pay these obligations promptly, he or she is expected to make satisfactory arrangements for payment and abide by these arrangements.

(b) Disciplinary action may be considered when an employee has handled his or her financial affairs in such a way that:

(1) Action on complaints received from creditors requires the use of a considerable amount of official time, or

(2) It appears that financial difficulties are impairing the employee's efficiency on the job, or

(3) Because of the employee's financial irresponsibility, the attitude of the general public toward the Department may be adversely affected; and the employee after counseling does not make arrangements to meet his or her financial obligations.

Subpart E—Gifts, Entertainment, and Favors

§ 73.735-501 Prohibited acceptance of gifts, entertainment, and favors.

(a) Except as provided in §§ 73.735-502 and 73.735-506, an employee shall not directly or indirectly solicit or accept anything of monetary value, including gifts, gratuities, favors, entertainment or loans from a person who the employee knows, or should know because of the nature of the employee's work:

(1) Has, or is seeking to obtain, contractual or other business or financial relations with the employee's principal operating component, or sub-unit thereof; or with a component of the Department with respect to which the employee has official duties;

(2) Conducts operations or activities that are regulated by the employee's principal operating component, or sub-unit thereof or by a component of the

Department with respect to which the employee has official duties; or

(3) Has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the employee's official duties.

(b) Employees may not designate a person or an organization, including charitable or non-profit organizations, to accept any gift which an employee is prohibited from accepting directly.

§ 73.735–502 Permissible acceptance of gifts, entertainment, and favors.

(a) An employee may accept a gift, gratuity, favor, entertainment, loan or similar favor of monetary value which stems from a family relationship such as that between the employee and his or her parents, spouse or children, if it is clear that the relationship is the motivating factor.

(b) Loans from banks or other financial institutions may be accepted on customary terms.

(c) Unsolicited advertising or promotional material such as pens, note pads, calendars and similar items of nominal intrinsic value may be accepted.

(d) An employee may accept food or refreshment of nominal value on infrequent occasions in the ordinary course of a luncheon or dinner meeting or on an inspection tour only if the employee is properly in attendance and there is not a reasonable opportunity to pay.

Example 1: Employee is on the premises of Company participating in a meeting at a normal mealtime. A representative of Company provides a meal for all meeting participants from a Company facility and there is no established method for payment. Employee may accept.

Example 2: Employee is on the premises of Company and he or she goes outside for lunch with a representative of the Company. The representative offers to pay the bill. Since it is practical for the employee to pay for his or her own meal, the employee may not accept.

(e) An employee may also accept food or refreshment of nominal value on infrequent occasions if the food and/or refreshment is offered to all participants or attendees of a meeting or convention.

Example 1: During the course of a convention of a professional organization a luncheon open to all attendees is sponsored by a

corporation which conducts business with the Department and the employee has official dealings with representatives of the corporation. The employee may attend the luncheon.

§ 73.735–503 Criminal provisions relating to gifts, entertainment, and favors.

(a) The law provides criminal penalties for whoever, directly or indirectly:

(1) Receives or accepts anything of value for or because of any official act the employee has performed or will perform; or

(2) Gives, offers or promises anything of value for the performance of an official act or to influence the performance of an official act. 18 USC 201.

(b) The law prohibits an employee from receiving any salary or any contribution to, or supplementation of, his or her salary as compensation for services as an officer or employee of the Government from any source other than the United States or any State, county or municipality. This law does not prohibit an employee from continuing to participate in a bona fide pension, retirement, group life, health or accident insurance, profit-sharing, stock bonus or other employee welfare or benefit plan maintained by a former employer. 18 U.S.C. 209.

Example 1: A corporate executive is asked to accept a position in the Department. The corporation offers to continue to pay the executive the difference between his or her salary as a Government employee and that received by an employee of the corporation. Such payment would be considered to be "compensation for" the employee's Government service and is prohibited.

Example 2: A corporate executive is asked to accept a position in the Department. The corporation proposes to pay him or her a special severance payment in anticipation of this or her serving in the Government. This proposal would be prohibited because there is no distinction between the proposed lump-sum payment and the prohibited continuation of salary payments described in the example above.

Example 3: A corporate executive is asked to accept a position in the Department. The corporation has an established policy which provides for an amount of severance pay to be paid any departing executive and proposes to make payment based on that policy when